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185 578 Plan in three years. The later development showed that it took not three but ten years to reach the target figures which the first Five-Year Plan had fixed for the coal and oil production of the Far East.* The Central Government refused to admit that the shortcomings in the Far East resulted from deficiencies of all-Union planning, and tried to put the blame on local scapegoats who were charged with committing deliberate sabotage. More than that, the Central Government alleged that the Far Eastern administrators were 'Japanese spies', although they were, presumably, no more connected with Japan than the Leningrad opposition was linked with Germany. The Far Eastern communists, it is true, had shown great eagerness to establish commercial relations with other Pacific countries including Japan, but this had been done with the agreement of the centre.

THE PURGE OF THE 'CIVILIANS'

661 687 665 Although there was no evidence for charges of high treason the Soviet Government carried out a purge on a vast scale throughout the Soviet Far East. It would be incorrect to say that there was one big purge. There were at least two purges, one directed primarily against 'civilian' communists, and another aimed mainly at the army. The first purge, which was closely connected with economic shortcomings, started in the first months of 1937 and led to the disappearance of the head of the administration of the F.E.T., Krutov, and of the party secretary, Lavrentev. At the same time administrative heads and party officials were sacked all over the Soviet Far East. For many months there were no 'first secretaries' in many city committees and district committees of the Communist Party.

There is one aspect of the purge of the 'civilians' in the Far East which deserves special mention, the purge of the railwaymen. The railwaymen of the Far East were traditionally the backbone of the Communist Party in that distant part of the Soviet Union, and the solidity of Moscow's connection with the Pacific coastal areas depended largely on their efficiency. In the 'thirties' their job became increasingly difficult. Between 1933 and 1936 the freight turnover of the Far Eastern railways had increased three times. This was more than they could stand. The Far Eastern railway system broke down. A great many accidents occurred. The Government asserted that they were all engineered 'on instructions of the Japanese intelligence service.' The supreme responsibility for the wrecking of trains was officially attributed to Trotsky and to the

* Production of oil was to reach 464,000 tons by the end of the first Five-Year Plan in 1932. In 1933 output was 196,000 tons; in 1936, 308,000 tons, and in 1938, 360,000 tons. The coal target for 1932 was 4,000,000 tons. In 1933 output had reached 2,020,000 tons, and in 1936, 3,617,000 tons. The target for 1937 was 5,000,000 tons, but actual production in 1938 was only 4,750,000 tons.

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661 various members of the so-called 'Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and
687 Trotskyites' which was allegedly led by Bukharin. In the Far East itself
665 the Soviet Government staged a big trial of leading railway officials working on the Amur railway line, a sector of the Trans-Siberian railway. The trial took place in the town of Svobodny. All forty-four defendants were sentenced to death as 'Japanese spies'. They included the deputy head of the Amur railway line, the head of its planning department, the deputy head of the locomotive service and many other people of similar standing in the Far Eastern railway transport.[5] The sentence of Svobodny had considerable repercussions throughout the F.E.T. Sweeping changes took place not only in the top leadership of the Far Eastern railways but also among the rank and file of the railwaymen. Demobilized soldiers were rapidly trained for the railway and called upon to fill the gaps opened by the purges.

The man who, in 1937, carried out the purge in the Soviet Far East was a complete newcomer to the territory. His name was Vareikis, he was Lithuanian-born and had occupied various important positions in European Russia, as party secretary first of Voronezh and later of Stalingrad. He was also a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. When he arrived in Khabarovsk in the spring of 1937 he seemed to possess the full confidence of Stalin, but by the end of the year he had lost it. He was charged with surrounding himself with spies and white guardists. A case in point was the editor of the largest Far Eastern newspaper *Tikhookeanskaya Zvezda* (Far Eastern Star), Shver, who was expelled from the party by a special decision of the Central Committee taken at the beginning of October.[6] Vareikis survived his friend only by a few days.

THE PURGE OF THE FAR EASTERN ARMY

661 The disgrace of Vareikis and his supporters carried the disintegration of
701 the party apparatus in the Far East a step further. Only one important force continued to exist in the F.E.T., the Special Far Eastern Army and its commander, Marshal Vasily Konstantinovich Blyukher. But it was clear that this last bulwark of Far Eastern 'autonomism' would, sooner or later, be affected by the big Stalinist clean up of Russia's military leadership. One of the defendants of the Tukhachevsky trial of June 1937, the commander of the Byelorussian Military District, Uborevich, had had important connections with the Far East. In 1922 he had been the liberator of Vladivostok and he had stayed in the F.E.T. for several years. There was another military person who was closely linked with Stalin's Far Eastern opponents, Gamarnik, the chief of the Political Administration of the Red Army and an Assistant People's Commissar for Defence. Had he not committed suicide he would most

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patriarchal literature which has to be banned, and no cultural societies which have to be closed down because of bourgeois romanticism. Even so the small peoples of the Far East adhere, just as other peoples do, to their national traditions which are closely linked with those primitive religious beliefs usually summed up under the collective name of 'Shamanism'.

Shamanism is fundamentally the belief in good and bad spirits. The exact nature of the belief varies from one tribe to the other. The spirits may be deified animals, they may be ancestors, or they may simply be the forces of nature. Shamanism is not based on an elaborate ecclesiastical organization, but there are, nevertheless, mediators between spirits and ordinary human beings. These mediators are called Shamans. They enjoy a great deal of respect and prestige in the tribal society and this alone would have been sufficient reason to make them 'Enemy Number One' of the Soviet régime in all National Districts and National Areas inhabited by the Far Eastern aborigines.

The régime has charged the Shamans with many crimes, in particular with being dishonest and with consciously deceiving the people. This accusation has been contradicted by many Russian and foreign anthropologists who have had first hand experience of the Far Eastern Shamans. They have made the point that most Shamans sincerely believe in their superior power and are firmly convinced of their ability to cure the sick and to talk to spirits or to deceased relatives. It does not seem that Shamans charged more than moderate fees for their services if they demanded payment at all.[23] According to P. E. Petri, Professor of Ethnology at the Irkutsk University, it was completely erroneous to suggest that the majority of the Shamans were charlatans exploiting the credulity of the natives. For the Shaman, Petri wrote as late as 1928, his vocation constituted a heavy obligation which the spirits had imposed on him. The Shaman knew respite neither by day nor by night. He might at any time be called out and had then to travel dozens of miles in any weather. The Shaman was rarely at home and his household was therefore neglected. As a rule the Shamans were poor and only those living together with their brothers were better off.[24]

According to official Soviet evidence the Shamans engaged in 'mad resistance' to the extension of Soviet power to the north. They disseminated 'provocative rumours' aimed at inciting the tribesmen against the Russians. These charges against the Shamans are reflected in a number of novels which Soviet writers have written on life in the Far East. For example, Syomushkin's novel, *Alitet goes to the Hills*, records the collective resignation of the chairmen of the tribal Soviets in a part of Chukotka, as the result of the evil influences of one important Shaman. These chairmen gathered one day in the tent of the Russian secretary of the Communist Party and surrendered to him their letters of appoint-

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ment. They tried to get rid of these credentials as quickly as possible, because they were believed to be bearers of the evil spirit. The resigning chairmen suggested that the local Shamans should be appointed in their place, as they would be more successful in dealing with the spirits. The Party secretary refused to comply with this request, and, after a great deal of arguing, most of the chairmen agreed to retain their credentials, and to resume their jobs.[25] In the novel, *Where the Sukpai river flows*, by Kimonko, which deals with the life of the Udege people, the Shaman is both anti-Soviet and anti-Russian. He expresses his political philosophy in the following words:—'It is better to be doomed than to go to the Russians. The Russians will make soldiers out of us and destroy us to a man... The Russians and the Udege are different people. The man of the forest has laws of his own. One must abide by these laws.'[26]

The Shamans preserved their influence throughout the 'twenties' and early 'thirties'. They played an important part in the resistance movement against collectivization. In fact, the terms 'Shaman' and 'kulak' became interchangeable in the official Soviet vocabulary. But this is the usual simplification with which communist anti-religious propaganda operates. An official Soviet analysis referring to the social origin of 300 Shamans showed that between 50 and 60 of them came from poor families (bednota) and only 5 to 10 per cent were 'kulak elements'. More discriminating Soviet writers have stated therefore that Shamans whilst belonging to various social groups constituted 'a reactionary counter-revolutionary force taking sides with native kulaks and semi-feudal elements'.[27]

In addition to collectivization the Shamans obstructed practically every measure taken by the Government in the economic, cultural and sanitary fields. The target figures of the economic plans could not be fulfilled because the Shamans dissuaded the natives from fishing and hunting on certain days or from killing certain animals, for instance walrus. Soviet newspapers and journals were boycotted because the Shamans agitated against their dissemination. Also the new schools in the Far North and the 'kultbazy'* suffered from the sabotage of the Shamans. The latter persecuted and threatened the lives of Soviet teachers, particularly those of Russian nationality.[28] They hindered the re-education of the northern tribes to a more healthy and hygienic life, and intimidated people to such an extent that they did not dare even to go near a Soviet medical station.[29]

Although there is likely to be substance in most of these charges, they

* The 'kultbazy' or 'Cultural Stations' are political, cultural, and scientific research centres which the Soviet régime organized in the Far North. 'Cultural Stations' usually include a boarding school, a kindergarten, crèches, a hospital, a first-aid post, a veterinary station, a metereological station and even a museum. Most 'Cultural Stations' later developed into townships. Out of the fifteen 'Cultural Stations' three were founded in the Far East, one for the Koryaks, one for the Lamuts and the third for Chukchi and Eskimos.